



HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

City of Burlington

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Minutes

Human Resource Policy Committee

February 25th, 2022

Human Resources Conference Room/ Zoom Meeting

Human Resources Conference Room, 200 Church Street, Suite 102

8:30 am to 10:30am

Present: Councilor Sarah Carpenter (SC), Councilor Chip Mason (CM), Councilor Joan Shannon (JS), HR Talent, Development & Diversity Manager, Vanessa Santos Eugenio (VSE), HR Director, Kerin Durfee (KD), HR Coordinator, Jessie Anderson.

Meeting called to order by SC at 8:40am

1) Agenda

SC opened meeting and moved to approve and amend agenda by removing items eight and nine. JS moved to adopt the agenda; CM seconded.

2) Approval of Minutes from December Meeting 12/17

SC moved to approve minutes from HRPC Meeting on December 17, 2021; CM, JS seconded.

3) Public forum

No members of the public present for comments.

4) New Role in HR- assistant director

KD mentioned that the Board of Finance approved a couple of months ago for HR department to hire and fill the role for an Assistant Director- Benefits and Risk Management to fill the need of getting City claims under control in regards to Workers Compensation and employees benefits.

KD also shared that this role will be helpful for examining changes in the insurance world as it relates to City employee needs.

She also shared the City has a great relationship with Hickok & Boardman (H&B) Insurance and it is important that this relationship is maintained and strengthened to reduce claims through prevention and benefit trainings.

KD shared that Lynn Reagan was selected to fill this position and she served as an Interim HR director

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and brings a lot of experience to the role. She added that Lynn will be fully stepping into the position as of April 1st.

KD also shared with councilors that the HR department is a very compliance driven and that we need to stabilize the department in a sustainable way that benefits the team and the City as a whole.

She added that this role is crucial to stabilization in the case that she absent or not reappointed, the Assistant director can step-up and that the strategic leadership remain within the department whether she is here or not.

KD asked if councilors had any questions.

JS asked for the total headcount of the HR department.

KD shared that there is currently seven team members consisting of three HR managers, an HR Generalist, HR Coordinator, and a HR Talent, Development & Diversity Manager.

JS asked if KD is back filling Lynn's role.

KD responded saying that HR is currently recruiting for another HR manager to fill Lynn's role as she transition to Assistant Director. Therefore, the department will have eight team members in the future.

KD mentioned that once we hire the new HR manager, Lynn will move fully into the HR Assistant Director role and this will fully staff the department.

JS thanked KD and KD thanked JS.

5) Union Negotiations (brief update)

SC asked KD about the Union Negotiations process and how it related to the concept of the City looking into offering flexible benefits that attract applicants to City positions.

KD shared that we are currently having this conversation and we have met with our partners at Cross Benefits Solutions.

She added that HR and the Chief of Administration (COA), Katherine Schad, have been working on this initiative actively and there are some parts of the current benefits plan that will not change but it is the hope to be able to offer employees flexible options.

KD mentioned that in terms of benefits, we are hoping to take Family Leave and flexible plans around employment status (temp or part time roles) to the bargaining table.

She shared that in terms of recruitment, there is currently no daycare options available and we are running out of Covid-19 Emergency Leave time being used for child care.

KD added that she and Katherine will be working on sorting out any benefits as they relate to

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recruitment. She said that if we are not able to bring everything to the bargaining table that the conversations around benefits will continue to happen pass the contracts.

KD shared that we are just about ready to negotiate and that we have lists from all City Department Heads. She added that this will be a difficult year for negotiations for BPOA but other unions such as IBEW, AFSCME, and Fire will be negotiating in mid-March.

KD mentioned that something to keep me mind is that we don't know what length of contract we are going to get because there is a huge list from Fire and Police and there are concerns around staffing levels in both departments. She added that we are ready and it will be her and the City Attorney team and another person coming into the negotiation process is the City Payroll Manager, Laurie Thompson.

KD said that Laurie has been extremely helpful to the HR team and has a lot of insight into contract language and holiday time and we can save time on grievances by including her in the negotiation process. She also mentioned that Lynn Reagan will join the negotiation process with IBEW because she has been overseeing BED for a long time and she is familiar with their contract.

KD shared that she is looking forward to the process and there is more to come but the staffing need is key issue that needs to be talked about as a cohesive piece.

SC asked, who will be joining the negotiations from the City Attorney team?

KD mentioned that Attorney Justin St. James will be leading his team to support with negotiations.

KD also added that Attorney Justin St. James was recently promoted to Deputy City Attorney thanks to the Board of Finance and he brings the most experience with labor laws to his team and has prepared everyone for negotiations.

SC asked, do we use any outside assistance for negotiations?

KD shared that we are working on a contract with VRM for Police negotiations.

JS added that the Deputy City Attorney taking on negotiation by themselves is hard and time consuming so it's great to see that Attorney Justin St. James will be leading his team to support with negotiations and that we are getting extra help with the police department.

JS raised an issue to the HRPC committee about a City council campaign that is promising voters that they will go against raising police salaries during union negotiations. She added that this is not something that councilors will even be participating in.

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JS also mentioned that the City Council might need some coaching around what their role is and what is appropriate for councilors to be promising voters. She asked the council if such campaign pledges put councilors in jeopardy should they get elected and cannot deliver what they promise.

KD thanked JS for bringing this issue to the committee attention.

KD shared that this is not possible and people should not be talking about union negotiations when they are not aware of the full process.

She shared that some of the legislative decisions made during negotiation is not contractual so councilors cannot guarantee anything to voters.

KD added that we saw the Campaign materials in question and she can't publicly comment on it but no, should the person get elected, they are not in the position to deliver what they are promising.

JS asked if someone makes a claim like this, it is grounds for recusal?

CM said no.

JS added that sometimes people do such things because they don't know or understand the dynamics of union negotiations. She said that it might be helpful for KD to send out an email to City Council letting them know their role in the negotiations process and to offer some advice on dos and don'ts.

SC added that we could maybe talk to Council president Maxwell Tracy and for KD and Attorney Justin St. James to come up with a memo that address the role of councilors and put it on the agenda as an action item to be reviewed in public.

JS added that the memo will likely be for the new council so the appropriate time to look at it will be during our second meeting in April. She also suggested that we send out an email before the new council comes in because the sooner the better.

SC added we that get the email memo out in March and then do a training session for new councilors in April.

KD mentioned that a memo and working session from her and Justin is a great idea and she work on clarifying the negotiation process to new and current councilors. She added that is essential that councilors understand their roles because they will be working with unions as a part of the City.

KD added that this is a great conversation and we should work together to let people know about the limitations and to protect our employee interests.

KD thanked the council for their feedback.

6) Recruitment Update

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a. Social media

VSE shared that the HR department has launched a Social Media Campaign. She also added the HR have managed a long standing LinkedIn page where positions get posted but we recently included Facebook and Instagram.

VSE mentioned that our Facebook and Instagram accounts have been growing and if offers us a way to engage people that are not a part of our community listserv.

She shared that City employees and community partners also receive job postings via email but we wanted to use the social media tool because it has a viral effect in which people outside the City can share and promote our job postings with their networks.

VSE shared a view of the LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram pages with the HRPC Committee and further explained the layout, graphic, and information included in each posting. She also added that by doing this, people looking at the post can have easy access to key details about the job.

VSE noted the comments have been turn off on the social media pages to decrease work load. She also added that we are currently using the pages to promote jobs but we hope to also be able to share City employee antidotes and benefits.

VSE said that we hope to attract young people, those switching careers, and to be able to share the story of what it's like to work for the City. She acknowledge that this process takes time and resources to be completed.

b. Upcoming Job Fairs

JS asked if HR is currently working with the schools in our community and also promoting working in the trades. She emphasized the point that we as a community have not been advertising trade work enough and that this is also a path for young people to consider alongside college.

JS added that there is a lot of work out here that don't require a college degree and we should be proud of those that do such work.

VSE agreed with JS and added that we need to continue working on building relationship early with community partners.

VSE shared that since she has been here she has grown the City relationship with high schools in Milton, South Burlington, and Winooski and also has been thinking strategically about how we are engaging young people with internship opportunities.

VSE shared that she has centralized the internship program in the HR department to build more The City of Burlington will not tolerate unlawful harassment or discrimination on the basis of political or religious affiliation, race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, veteran status, disability, HIV positive status or genetic information. The City is also committed to providing proper access to services, facilities, and employment opportunities. For accessibility information or alternative formats, please contact Human Resources Department at 865-7145.



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strategy around it, worked on thought compensation for interns, and building compliance from our departments to engage equity in this work.

VSE added that she also do career days at colleges and tech centers even though most of them are currently virtual due to the pandemic. She shared that she also tables at colleges and universities while bringing in voices from the 19 City departments to talk about the work they do with students.

VSE encouraged councilors to reach out and share ideas because there is always spaciousness to grow.

c. Ideas from councilors

JS shared that she has been promoting that the City is hiring at her NPR meetings and direct people to the HR page. She added that maybe she should be directing people to the social media pages as well.

JS suggested that we collaborate with colleges and universities to direct students to the City for internship opportunities.

VSE added that we want to offer paid internships and MOUs internships to allow access for students to grow and develop their career path.

KD mentioned that it important to talk about and stress the importance of having paid internships for students working and going to school at the same time.

7) Review Comprehensive Personnel Policy Manual update process and completion plan

KD shared that the Comprehensive Personnel Policy Manual is now posted on the City Website. She added that we currently have a policy manual summary document that she can post publicly and send around to councilors about the changes we will be making.

KD said that if you read section 1.4 it talks about the lengthy process to get changes approved and she completed all the steps required for the HR director. She added that the document need employee comments, bargaining unit comments, and then it goes back to City Council.

KD asked the councilors for advice on deciding if she should share the document with the council now or wait to share it with the new council. She added that the language was updated to be modernized and to address pronoun issues. The document was edited by the HR and City Attorney office.

CM shared that things should go as planned and that we should not wait for the new council.

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SC added that we should not use the personal manual as a tool to get what we want. She explained further that the document explains benefits and other processes.

KD shared that people will need to understand that difference between the Comprehensive Personnel Policy Manual and the contract.

SC asked if there were any other questions.

8) Adjournment

SC mentioned meeting planned for March 25th at 8:30am. SC adjourned the meeting; JS & CM seconded.

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